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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USOSCE 000001

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [OSCE](#) [GG](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS ON AN OSCE FIELD MISSION MANDATE FOR  
GEORGIA

REF: TBILISI 2492

USOSCE 00000001 001.9 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Julie Finley, REASONS 1.4 (B), (D)

1. (C) Summary: Whether it was their full intention, Russian obstructionism at the OSCE in Vienna over the last few weeks has resulted in a planned closure of the OSCE Mission to Georgia starting on January 1. Despite a series of creative approaches by the outgoing Finnish Chairmanship to reset the Mission's mandate while seeking to take into account Russian support for the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Moscow was unable to agree on a new mandate acceptable to the other 55 OSCE participating States. The Mission is an important locus of international coordination in Georgia, but it is not irreplaceable. Our next steps in Vienna should include consultations with interested, like-minded states on a way ahead along with a review of the current Mission's most valuable activities with consideration of alternative providers. End Summary:

>> OSCE in Georgia

2. (C) The current mandate for the OSCE Mission to Georgia expires on December 31, 2008 and will at best face a gap of some length before being renewed in some form. The Mission was established in 192 and currently has 195 staff, including 58 international and 137 local employees. One of its main tasks is conflict prevention and resolution in relation to the conflict in South Ossetia. A total of 28 unarmed Military Monitoring Officers (MMOs) are monitoring the military situation in Georgia, particularly near the conflict zone; through their experience and excellent contacts, they have the wherewithal to identify hotspots and respond to them before tensions spiral out of control. The Mission has also established a number of confidence-building measures, including an Economic Rehabilitation Program which uses economic engagement as a means to promote peaceful resolution of the conflict. In the pol-mil sphere, the Mission conducts programs on destruction of stockpiles of surplus munitions, law enforcement reform and strengthening of Georgia's counter-terrorism and border management capabilities.

3. (C) The Mission also has a wide array of programs to promote respect for human rights, assist in democratic institution building, monitor and promote freedom of media and strengthen civil society. The OSCE Mission is the only international mission that is both granted full access to the entire territory of Georgia, to include especially South Ossetia - although access to the latter since the August war has been frequently denied - and charged with both supporting the peaceful resolution of the conflict and promoting respect for human rights and democratic development. This dual role of monitoring the military situation and working with society to promote democratic development enables the OSCE Mission, and through it the member-states of the OSCE, to maintain a focus on short-term concerns, such as renewed outbreaks of violence, and a sustainable long-term resolution of the conflict, which will respond to the needs of the various communities affected.

>> The Mandate Lapses

4 (C) In its waning days, the Finnish OSCE chairmanship has been engaged on parallel, interrelated tracks to salvage a meaningful role for the OSCE in Georgia. Given Russia's diplomatic recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, it became clear that a simple, long-term extension of the existing Mission mandate would not be possible. Instead, the

Finns proposed a new structure involving a Personal Representative, based in Vienna, with offices in Tskhinvali and Tbilisi focused on conflict resolution and management, along with an extension of the current OSCE Mission to Georgia, covering the other functions. Realizing that agreement on the new structure was unlikely by the end of the year, the Finns also proposed a short-term &technical8 rollover of the current mandate for the first three months of 2009. Helsinki had hoped to conclude their Chairmanship at the end of the year with the technical rollover approved and broad agreement on the new structure; neither has happened.

15. (C) As a first step in establishing the new, long-term structure, the Finns on December 18 issued a draft Permanent Council decision to extend the Georgia Mission minus the elements that would be under the purview of the Personal Representative. The next day in advance of the PC discussion

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